

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



NASA ACADEMY MENTOR HANDBOOK

**Office of Higher Education, Mail Code 602
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Greenbelt, MD 20771
<http://academy.gsfc.nasa.gov/>**



Official NASA Seal

The NASA Vision:

- To improve life here,
- To extend life to there,
- To find life beyond

NASA Mission Statement:

- *To understand and protect our home planet*
- *To explore the Universe and search for life*
- *To inspire the next generation of explorers ... as only NASA can."*

PREFACE

This handbook contains information about the Goddard NASA Academy program and attempts to summarize aspects that are common to successful mentoring relationships and suggests some basic mentoring/host guidelines to the Goddard scientists and engineers who have agreed to host and guide Academy participants in their resident part-time research work.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF HISTORY

The NASA Academy was founded in 1993 (as the "NASA Space Academy") at the Goddard Space Flight Center by Gerald (Jerry) Soffen, former Mars Viking project scientist, architect of the NASA Astrobiology program, and first Director of the Goddard Office of University Programs. Jerry was an

accomplished scientist and a dedicated educator. He took advantage of the unusual opportunities presented to him during his career and realized the importance of mentoring in the life of young professionals. In his vision, the Academy was intended to exceed in purpose and content all the other regular internships by familiarizing its participants with as many facets of the NASA agency as possible. With his dynamic personality and unique leadership, he opened many gateways and defined a new standard of excellence.

"To give possible 'leaders' a view into how NASA, the university community, and the private sector function, set their priorities, and contribute to the success of the aerospace program."



As the reputation of the Goddard Academy widened, new NASA Academy Programs were started at the Marshall Space Flight Center (1994), the Ames Research Center (1997), and the Dryden Flight Research Center (1997). The name of the program changed from "NASA Space Academy" to "NASA Academy" at specific NASA Centers. A continuous effort is being made to establish or re-establish Academies at various NASA Centers, with different profiles and focus areas. In 2005, NASA Academies will take place at Goddard, Glenn and Marshall.

There have been several international participants in the NASA Academy from England, Italy and France. In 2003 and 2004, French students from SUPAERO University attended the Goddard Academy. The 2005 also hosts one French student from SUPAERO.

Jerry Soffen died on November 22, 2000. We honor his legacy by continuing the Academy program that he loved so well. In 2002, the NASA Academy celebrated ten years of successful activity. So far, 428 participants have graduated from the program.

1.2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The NASA Academy is an intensive resident summer program of higher learning for college undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing professional and leadership careers in space-related fields.

The NASA Academy program is designed to present a comprehensive package of information and experiences about the organization of the NASA Agency, some of its most important current and planned science, engineering, education, and technology enterprises, as well as a number of non-technical areas of critical significance, such as management, budgeting, safety, personnel and career development, leadership, space law, international cooperation, etc. Besides attending lectures and workshops, the Research Associates are involved in supervised research in GSFC laboratories, and participate in visits to NASA Headquarters, various NASA Centers and facilities, the Applied Physics Laboratory, and a number of space-related academic laboratories and industries.

The NASA Academy at Goddard Space Flight Center is coordinated with the University of Maryland at College Park: College of Computer, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences; the A. James Clark School of Engineering, and the Department of Geography. As such, participants receive Maryland academic credit. The Course Description from the Bulletin of the University of Maryland at College Park is:

Listing: CMPS/ENES/GEOG 496

Grading: (S)atisfactory/(U)nsatisfactory

Course title: NASA Academy

Course description: A ten-week resident summer institute at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center for juniors, seniors, and first and second year graduate students interested in pursuing professional and leadership careers in aerospace-related fields. The national scholarship program includes research in a Goddard laboratory and a combination of lectures and workshops on the mission, current activities, and management of NASA. Students interested in the Academy will find on-line information at <http://www.nasa-academy.nasa.gov>. Application should be made before January 31. Sponsorship by an affiliated State Space Consortium is recommended.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the NASA Academy at GSFC are:

- To identify, to encourage, and to assist the future leaders of the aerospace program
- To provide an opportunity for participants to contribute to research in a world-class, space-related laboratory
- To provide a unique, intensive, and rigorous educational and training curriculum on NASA, its in-house science and technology projects, its collaboration with other National centers, industry, and academia, and its extensive technology-transfer programs
- To foster creativity, personal initiative, and leadership qualities, together with teamwork, appreciation for diversity, and professional ethics

2 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Academy program is financially supported by the NASA GSFC Office of Higher Education and other NASA and non-NASA organizations. Academy participants are sponsored by the USA regional Space Grant Consortia and the French Space Agency. Special events have been funded by the NASA Academy Alumni Association and others.

2.2 ORGANIZATION

The NASA Goddard Academy is administered and operated within the GSFC Office of Higher Education.

Chief, University Programs - Dr. Vigdor L. Teplitz

Dr. Teplitz directs the Office of Higher Education and provides vision, inspiration, and leadership for the Academy and other programs offered by the Office. He joined Goddard at the beginning of 2003 on a three-year leave of absence from the Physics Department of Southern Methodist University. His previous experience includes academic appointments at MIT and Virginia Tech, as well as twelve years in the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and two years in the White House Science Office. His research is in elementary particle theory, primarily at its border with astrophysics and cosmology.

Co-Director, University Programs - Dr. Richard P. Fahey

Dr. Fahey serves as Deputy Chief of the Office of Higher Education. Prior to Dr. Teplitz's arrival, he led the Office of Higher Education as Acting Director for several years both before and after Jerry Soffen's death. For the past three decades, he has been developing methods of presenting aspects of relativity and quantum theory to specialist and non-specialist audiences. During that time, he has taught courses in physics, astronomy, relativity and cosmology, aerospace engineering, and the philosophy of nature. Dr. Fahey currently conducts research in cosmology and gravitational wave detection at GSFC. He also holds the Naval Space Command Research Chair at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

Program Manager - Mr. David Rosage

Mr. Rosage has served NASA in various technical roles (ME) between 1980 and 2000, and as Program Manager of the Academy since 2000. Besides managing the NASA Academy Program for Goddard, he is responsible for short and long-term program improvements, expansion of the Academy to all NASA centers, enabling international participants, and increasing Academy alumni involvement and their awareness to the NASA community.

Dean of Academic Affairs - Dr. Joseph Di Rienzi

Joseph Di Rienzi is a Professor of Physics at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland and a Visiting Scientist at NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center's Laboratory of Astronomy and Solar Physics. Dr. Di Rienzi received his Ph.D. in Physics from the Polytechnic Institute of New York and his B.S. from Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. His research interests are in theoretical physics, in particular atomic physics and the foundations of quantum mechanics. He works at Goddard with Dr. Richard Drachman on theoretical modeling of matter-antimatter reactions, and currently they are investigating the scattering of positronium with helium. Dr. Di Rienzi has had a long association with the NASA Academy. He served under Dr. Soffen as the original Dean in 1993 and 1994. He returned again as the Dean in 1999. Dr. Di Rienzi is a long time member of the Selection Committee, and he is really excited to be part of this year's Academic Staff.

Program and IT Support - Mr. Johnny Erickson

Johnny has a B.S. in Computer Science and is the co-founder of a software design company. A pillar of the 2002 and 2003 Goddard Academy, Johnny is an enthusiastic and devoted supporter of the Academy and its Alumni.

In the operation of the NASA Academy, the two staff members provide general assistance and logistics coordination. They reside full time at the Academy House and are available as facilitators in all the relevant program activities.

Academy Alumni Coordinator - Ms. Laura Burns

Ms. Burns is an alumna of the 1996 Academy at the Marshall Space Flight Center and an active member of the NAAA. She currently works at GSFC supporting the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). As the Alumni Coordinator, Laura informs, recruits, and coordinates alumni participation in all Academy extracurricular activities.

Special Assistant for Operations - Mrs. Mary Floyd

Mrs. Floyd provides support for housing, meals, transportation, and lodging on field trips, and distribution of the Academy participants' financial reimbursements.

Together with the designated Academy staff listed above, the Academy participants are expected to be actively involved in the affairs of the Academy, assuring its day-to-day success. Two annual staff, the Operations Manager and the Logistics Manager also work to coordinate the day to day activities of the Academy.

All the members of the Office of Higher Education are pleased to grant any additional assistance and support.

3 THE NASA GODDARD ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS

3.1 ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection of participants in the NASA Goddard Academy is based on the following criteria:

- Academic rank (junior, senior, first, or second year graduate)
- Academic performance (GPA higher than 3.0 or equivalent)
- Demonstrated interest in the space program
- Demonstrated leadership qualities
- Research and/or project interest and experience
- Maturity
- Recommendation and references

Both the selection process and placement of the Academy participants in Goddard's research groups is assisted by recommendations from faculty, administrators, academic supervisors, and co-workers, and the applicants' self-profiling essays.

Citizenship or permanent residence is required for US applicants.

3.2 PLACEMENT IN GSFC LABORATORIES

The selected students are matched with their hosts in GSFC Laboratories, in advance of their arrival at the Center and based on their mutual agreement and expressed mutual interest.

3.3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To provide an insight into the depth and intensity of the Goddard Academy program, this Handbook includes a list of the principal duties and responsibilities of the participants, as follows:

- Work with the assigned research supervisors on the individual laboratory or field research projects
- Work together on the "Group Project"
- Attend all Academy functions (lectures, workshops, review sessions, field trips)

- Prepare and deliver Poster and Final Oral Presentations related to the individual and group project work executed during the Academy session
- Create mini-educational Internet modules related to their research.
- Create weekly Internet reports of the Academy activities, as components of the Goddard Academy Web Site
- Create the Goddard Academy Yearbook
- Create original "Logo", "Patch", and "Mascot" for the NASA Goddard Academy
- Assist in the operation of the Academy, as needed

4 THE "NASA EXPERIENCE" AND THE ROLE OF MENTORS, HOSTS, AND SUPERVISORS

The national and international reputation of the NASA Academy can be credited in part to the unique relationship between the participants and their mentors. In a relatively short time, by observing the mentors and their associates at work, mingling with the larger NASA scientific community, and lending a hand in the real work of NASA laboratories, the students acquire professional skills and work habits that shape in unpredictable ways their professional development into the future scientists and leaders of the space program.

Often Academy students' mentors are the best teachers they have ever had. Additionally, mentors cultivate valuable coaching, feedback, and leadership skills that can further their own personal and professional development. When viewed as an enabling process that facilitates career development and skills exchange, mentoring brings satisfaction and benefit to all parties involved. Professional mentor-mentee relationships may evolve into natural friendships and former students may become colleagues.

Effective mentoring need not always require large amounts of interaction time. Students augment their knowledge and experience in a variety of circumstances and with a variety of tools. Often, merely "shadowing" the experts is beneficial. Moreover, the ethical, scientific, and professional behavior of mentors and collaborators, as well as their attitude toward work, leave a strong impression on students.

The roles of the mentor may include coaching, teaching, motivating, counseling, guiding, opening doors, advising, sponsoring, and most importantly being a role model.

As a mentor, you can expect the NASA Academy students to be competent, ambitious, eager to learn, loyal, hardworking, and candid; have a positive attitude; and be able to listen, work as partners, and accept responsibilities.

5 BASIC MENTORSHIP GUIDELINES

- The mentors (Principal Investigators at GSFC or their designated substitutes) are invited to attend the First Day Orientation Meeting at which the NASA Academy participants (Research Associates - RAs) are introduced to their respective mentors.
- After the meeting, the mentors escort the student RAs to the host laboratories, introduce them to the local team members and collaborators, discuss the work assigned to them for the entire length of their summer residence at GSFC, and orient them regarding the location of the buildings, rooms, installations and facilities related to the students' work.
- It is essential that the Research Associates are provided with:
 - Dedicated desk space
 - Access to telephone
 - Access to computer
 - Access to printer
 - Access to Internet connection
- If shop work or data processing and use of specific software are involved in the assigned duties, it is important that the students are initiated in such operations, know the computer passwords, the location of necessary stockroom materials, and the technical personnel whom they may need to contact in order to execute and complete the assigned tasks, thus avoiding or minimizing any possible waste of time or idle presence in the labs.
- The GSFC mentors should be aware of the time schedule of the Academy RAs. The Academy program is based on an intensive daily schedule, with more than three full days (Monday through Wednesday) of each week working in the lab or on their research project. Exceptions being when the students are on field trips or participate in various other activities.

The remaining time of the Academy session is occupied (outside the host laboratories) with the development of the "Group Project", attendance of colloquia, seminars, or workshops, meetings with experts and leaders in space organizations, and field trips or visits to local University laboratories and industries.

- Although most of the RAs possess basic skills and are self-learners, it is important that the mentors, or their designated substitutes, are available to guide them, answer their questions, or supervise their work, as needed. Equally important is that the students be involved in challenging and intense learning/training work.
- On Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, expert speakers visit the Academy students at their residence at the University of Maryland for dinner, followed by after-dinner presentations on various topics of interest, in a more informal setting. All GSFC mentors are cordially invited to participate in these evening gatherings.
- Halfway through the summer, the RAs will organize a Poster Session. All the mentors, coworkers, visitors, and other interested persons are invited to attend and entertain scientific dialogs with the RA poster presenters. These conversations and the critique from scientists and experts are very valuable for the RAs. They allow RAs to demonstrate their communication skills and their knowledge and familiarity with the project. They also benefit the RAs by providing much needed feedback that can be used in the preparation of their Final Presentations (held at the conclusion of the Academy).
- At the final presentation and graduation ceremony, each Academy student will give a formal oral presentation of his/her research work at GSFC, followed by the presentation of the group project and awards ceremony. All GSFC mentors/supervisors are cordially invited to attend and evaluate these presentations. The mentors will also be recognized for their supervision and mentoring work. The RA's will also rehearse their presentations the day before the final presentations.
- The Academy students are instructed in advance of the general rules and constraints valid within the NASA-GSFC perimeters including: security, driving speeds, parking, restricted access to buildings and facilities, etc. No discipline incidents are expected to occur. However, the Academy staff appreciates the cooperation of the mentors in sharing the responsibility for the smooth and successful unfolding of the summer for the NASA Academy at GSFC.

6 CONDUCT, GRIEVANCES, & GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL

6.1 CODE OF CONDUCT

All Academy participants and staff shall conduct themselves in a manner that is honorable and respectful toward each other and the institutions they interact with, at all times, and in all places and circumstances in which the NASA Academy activities are conducted.

Any form of harassment or discrimination against any of the Academy community, its partners, hosts, or other interns is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

The participants should understand the professional pressures and time constraints faced by their mentors. For NASA scientists and engineers, mentoring is not their primary responsibility; in fact, the time spent with interns can be time taken from their own research.

The participants will give their hosts a detailed schedule of the Academy, and inform them in advance, as early as possible, of any schedule changes decided by the Academy staff, or unplanned absences due to illness or other unpredicted circumstances.

6.2 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Academy Principal Investigators are encouraged to raise any issues of concern involving the Academy community. More serious academic problems should be directed to the Dean of Academic Affairs (Dr. Joseph Di Rienzi) and any other problems to the Program Manager (Mr. David Rosage). Further appropriate actions will be taken by the Program Co-Directors (Dr. Richard P. Fahey and/or Dr. Richard C. Henry) and the Chief of Office of Higher Education (Dr. Vigdor Teplitz).

The actions taken will be decided by the Academy staff, and will range from mediation to dismissal of the Academy participant involved.

Full confidentiality will be respected if requested. Lodging a grievance shall not affect negatively the individual who initiated the grievance event.

6.3 GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL

A NASA Academy Research Associate must act professionally and maintain amiable conduct in the laboratory at Goddard Space Flight Center, at the Academy House, on the University of Maryland Campus, on trips, and at lectures and meetings. The following is a list of disruptions or violations, which can lead to dismissal:

- Providing misleading or false information on the application
- Inappropriate use of government facilities
- Actions disruptive to the group during activities or at the house
- Unprofessional conduct in the lab, or during group activities (speakers, tours, trips, outreach activities)
- Lack of respect of Principal Investigators, staff, speakers, and fellow Research Associates
- Failure to participate in the Group Project
- Failure to complete assigned tasks and deliverables (i.e., poster session, final presentations, speaker thank-you notes)
- Unexcused absences
- Other actions deemed inappropriate or disruptive by the Academy Staff

Infractions will be documented and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, in the following order:

1. Oral Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Final written warning and/or disciplinary probation
4. Dismissal

MENTORING RESOURCES

1. M.W. Galbraith and N.H. Cohen, Eds., *Mentoring: New Strategies and Challenges*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1995.
2. H.E. Johnson. *Mentoring for Exceptional Performance*, Griffin Publishing, Beverly Hills, 1997.
3. M. Murray, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1991.
4. G.F. Shea, *Mentoring: A Practical Guide*, Crisp Publications, Menlo Park, 1998.
5. M.Sinetar, *The Mentor's Spirit: Life Lessons on Leadership and the Art of Encouragement*, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1998.
6. S.G. Brainard and D.A. Harkins, "A Curriculum for Training Mentors and Mentees", WEPAN Western Regional Center, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 1998.
7. N.A. Gaffney, Ed., "A Conversation about Mentorship: Trends and Models", Council of Graduate Schools, Washington DC, 1995.
8. K.E. Kram, "Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life", *Organizational Behavior and Psychology Series*, H.J. Reitz, Ed., Scott, Foresman and Co., Glenview, IL, 1985.
9. M.A. Wunsch, Ed., "Mentoring Revisited: Making and Impact on Individuals and Institutions", *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 57, Spring 1994, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 1994.
10. Mentoring Information at the Los Alamos National Laboratory:
<http://education.lanl.gov/RESOURCES/mentors/Education.html>
11. Mentoring Information at the University of California at San Diego:
<http://rcr.ucsd.edu/content/descriptions/mentoring.htm>

12. Mentoring Information at Penn State University
<http://www.hhdev.psu.edu/careers/>
13. "Adviser, Teacher, Role Model, Friend: On Being a Mentor to Students in Science and Engineering", National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine

Thank you, and enjoy your student coworkers and your NASA Academy mentoring opportunity!

Appendix I: IMPRESSIONS OF NASA ACADEMY ALUMNI

"The Academy is the definition of a full-time experience - if this was the summer you planned on catching up on your reading or exercising four hours a day - forget it! The three most important qualities you need to have are a PASSION for space and the future, a COMMITMENT to the Academy (you must "give yourself to the Academy), and enough CONFIDENCE in yourself to believe you can change the world. Over only ten weeks you will garner more useful, real-world knowledge than you did all through college, meet an incredible number of brilliant and exciting people, and supply yourself with more tools than you could ever use to achieve your highest goals!"

- Eric A.

"Attending the Academy was one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career, the work is challenging and the friends you make will last a lifetime."

- Jeff A.

"The NASA Academy is a tool for making your dreams into reality. It provides the right framework and opportunities for developing the maturity and gaining the knowledge needed to interact with today's engineers and scientists."

- Rob B.

"The NASA Academy was a refreshing change after years of classroom and textbook learning. It was all about leadership and learning through interaction. The Academy gave me a renewed sense of enthusiasm for the space program and reminded me about all of the reasons why I chose this field in the first place!"

- Robin S.

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- Robin S.

"The NASA Academy is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. In a ten week period one learns more about NASA, government and industry relations with NASA, people, and oneself. It is an intense time of learning, experiencing, researching, meeting new people, making life-long friends, and basically having a great time. Not for those who enjoy relaxing, only for those with an intense desire to lead, and to learn about leading."

- Todd C.

"The NASA Academy is a dream-come-true experience, but only for those people seriously interested in the Space Program."

- Warren B.

"NASA Academy is not for people who lack passion about space exploration; nor is it for people who like to relax for extended periods of time. It is challenging, in that one must handle one's research tasks and also keep up with the tightly-scheduled encounters with NASA engineers, scientists, and administrators. If you can keep up with the pace, the rewards of NASA Academy -- research experience, professional development, and a new group of friends and colleagues in the 'space community,' among other things -- are proportional to your efforts."

- Mike L.

"Ever desire to pull the face off your wristwatch or remove the cover from your radio to discover how these devices operate? NASA Academy does this to the space program, and just like seeing the springs of the watch or the circuit boards in the radio, you'll find yourself with familiar and unfamiliar objects that present to you the challenge of understanding how everything works together."

- Laura S.

"My Academy experience was great. The program is for people who are interested in Space, NASA, and space-related industries. You don't have to have planned out your life in the space industry for the next 10 years, including a trip to the Moon or Mars or even be able to recite the entire Star Wars trilogy from memory (although one of us this summer did :). What you do need is a bright mind, a true interest in Space, and a passion for working with people. This program is NOT for you if you are strictly interested in research work. There are some other programs at Goddard that do that better. This program IS for you if you are interested in doing some research with one of the best scientists or engineers at Goddard on a cutting-edge project, learning about the structure, policy, and politics of Goddard, NASA, and the space program, and working closely with a bunch of motivated, exciting, and bright people like yourself. Of course, it is quite a fast-paced program. You'll be working with other students from around the country (and the world) on your own projects"

- Grant B.

"After my experience at NASA's space academy, I was asked to apply my new knowledge to Utah State University's space design class as a systems engineer. I met my wife in that class. A couple of years later, the professor for that class recommended me for a job as a spacecraft systems engineer, which I accepted."

- Mark W.

"The Academy gives you an in depth look at how NASA operates without hiding anything. As a result, you get to see both the strong points and the weak points of NASA. With this knowledge, it is possible for you to start thinking about what needs to be continued and what needs to be changed. I believe this is very important because if you do not understand the dynamics of a system you can not apply control to it."

- Jose G.

"SPACE. Suspended effortlessly looking at your mother planet. Your chest feels compressed, your eyes water, as you stand humbly in awe before the greatest and most beautiful sight you have ever seen: Planet Earth. The whole of blue mother Earth. Waltzing with you in the presence of millions of stars, across the greatest of ballrooms... SPACE."

- Enectali F.

"The summer that I spent attending the first NASA Academy was one of the most rewarding times of my life. More than anything, the Academy is a learning experience. From my interaction with the program, I learned not only about NASA, but how science and technology relate to society on broader scales, and how important it is that we keep the flame of exploration burning bright and hot."

- Matt L.

"This program is truly more than it is billed to be. I feel it has provided me with the tools to begin my long journey as a future leader in our space program and help me meet some incredible people that I will be working with along the way."

- Ran

Appendix II: INTERNET RESOURCES

- NASA Academy:
<http://www.nasa-academy.nasa.gov/>
- NASA Academy Alumni Association:
<http://www.nasa-academy.org/>
- International Space University:
<http://www.isunet.edu/>
- The Soffen Memorial Fund
<http://www.nasa-academy.org/soffen/donors.html>
- Goddard Space Flight Center
<http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- Goddard Space Flight Center's Mission
http://www.gsfc.nasa.gov/about_mission.html
- Office of Higher Education
<http://university.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

Appendix III:USEFUL CONTACTS

NASA Goddard Academy and Office of Higher Education Personnel (in alphabetic order):

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